

sions" are supplemented and strengthened I hope by information received from this excellent brother, to whom I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness.

One remark may be made, true of all this region, including parts of Western Texas and reaching almost to Los Angeles, viz., "which is desert." This well sums up and describes its general appearance and present condition. Everywhere, whether mountain or plain, hill or valley, it seems bare, barren, desolate, in many places with an abundance of sand and rocks, and small, stunted, ugly growths of various kinds, and now and then wee sanddunes or hillocks, the home of the gopher; ground-owl, and rattlesnake. Some of this land, we were told, looks very different in the rainy season, and even one good shower often changes the whole face of nature; while a wise and careful system of irrigation would doubtless convert the greater part into fruitful fields and charming landscapes, though where alkali abounds the case seems hopeless, it is always barren "and nigh unto cursing." As seen from the train and at this season of the year these bare mountains remind one of those of the "Old World," especially of Greece and Asia Minor.

Several other things may be said of this part of the country. One is as to the general "lay of the land," or rather the "profile" of this railroad: This is first up, then down, and finally up again; of course, there are many minor ups and downs, but this is a general description. For El Paso is some 3,700 feet above the sea, and the Southern Pacific as it passes into and crosses the corner of New Mexico goes almost continuously up, up for about 240 miles, and when near the Arizona line it reaches 4,600 feet; then for 300 miles it goes almost as continuously down, down to Yuma which is only 140 feet above. Nor is this all, for over the next 100 miles it goes yet further down, even below the sea level, at one point, Thermal, as low as 200 feet below. And in this semi-tropical region are grown the earliest cantaloupes, as well as other early fruits and vegetables. Here, too, on one side of the railroad is the curious "Salton Sea," an inland lake and with no outlet, some sixty miles long and half as broad, formed by the breaking out of the Colorado river from its old channel, caused by digging an irrigation ditch or canal, which gave away when the floods came down, and the waters poured in and partly filled this deep depression, destroying valuable salt works and fertile farming lands. After much time and trouble and large expense the break has at last been filled and the river forced back into its old channel, leaving this artificial, or accidental, sea or lake. How long it will continue remains to be seen, for they say it is evaporating very rapidly, but whether it will ever again become wholly dry only time can decide. From Yuma on there is again a gradual rise until Los Angeles is reached, which is 300 feet above the sea. There was also a very pleasant change of scenery after getting well into California, the "bad lands" of the desert being often replaced by fruitful fields and orchards.

Of the products of this desert land, or as I think much of it might be called this "Bad Lands" country, I learned something from the friend mentioned. The most common growth is the mesquite, which is found almost

everywhere; this varies in size from a small plant to a goodly tree thirty or forty feet high; it is not a pretty growth—and nothing is in these desert lands—it belongs to the acacia family and yields a pod with beans, sometimes two crops a year, which the Indians use for food, grinding or pounding up both pod and bean and cooking in various ways; the cattle also eat the plants and trees, living on them in dry seasons when all else is dead, and the flowers are good for honey and the wood for fuel. A veritable "gift of God" to these arid regions; and its presence always indicates good natural soil, which only needs irrigation to make it yield and blossom abundantly, though now dry and barren.

Another common growth is the yacca or soapweed, the Spanish Amale plant; this the Indians, Mexicans, and Americans, too, use for soap; the Indian women especially, after shaving or chopping it up, then soaking and boiling thoroughly, use it for washing their hair and value it highly. And the "Amale soap" made from the root is admirable for use in the "hard" water, which abounds and is exceeding hard in all these regions, and is quite an industry in El Paso.

The creosote, or greasewood, plant, with an odor like creosote, is also found here; the Indians use this as a remedy for rheumatism, boiling it in water and then bathing with it. Another plant found in many places is the white brush, which has a pretty white flower and blooms, whenever it rains, after each shower, and is very good for honey. The sage bush also abounds. The cactus may be seen in all this region, and in many shapes and sizes; not at all attractive or beautiful with its irregular, but thick, spreading leaves and long, sharp thorns or spines, but capable of growing almost anywhere, and in the low hot parts about Yuma attaining a great height and a mighty size, the "Giant Cactus," which bears a prickly pear, eaten and relished by some persons.

Of the towns, which were generally small, scattering and unattractive, only two or three were mentioned as of any note. Uvalde, in the midst of the greatest bee country in the world, so it is claimed; and Deming, the center of a large and fine cattle region, whence many thousands are shipped every year, first to the better grazing and corn lands of Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa, and later to the markets of Kansas City, St. Louis and Chicago. Around Deming, too, were many windmills and pumping plants, which accounts for the pasturage and cattle found thereabouts. There is also Tucson, —pronounced Too-son, accent on final—one of the largest cities of Arizona, and a live, growing place with large "expectations"; but we got not even a glimpse, for we passed this in the night.

These impressions may be concluded with one final remark or suggestion. All who have passed through this "desert land" and have seen how bare, barren and desolate it is by nature, but how fruitful and beautiful it becomes by irrigation, will understand and appreciate as never before the significance, as well as power and beauty, of the Scripture use of water and its effects as a type and illustration of the Gospel and its blessings. Let any one go through parts of California, where irrigation is being introduced, and see on one side the